Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School – 1st to 6th July 2018

The 8th Annual Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School was another huge success, with lots of feedback about the wonderful relaxed family atmosphere during the Summer School, the great value for money, excellent tutors, the inclusive evening sessions and the range of accommodation available in the area. The week started on Sunday, 1st July with Aifreann Gaeilge in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kilmovee with some lovely words of encouragement for the week from Fr. Vincent Sherlock. The choir was in full voice and there were some lively tunes from local musicians with the Irish reading by Irene Ní Chathasaigh to get the week of music, song, dance and Gaeilge started.

This was followed by the launch of "Sceichín a' Rinnce – Cill Móibhí Ceol & Leor", a CD and book compiled by Joe Byrne. The launch took place in the thatched cottage at Kilmovee Community Centre, with the CD and Book launched by journalist and Kilmovee native, Tom Shiel and co-editor of the book, Michael Kelly.

The Caulfield / Rooney family receiving their copy of Sceichín a' Rinnce

It was a lovely afternoon, with presentations of the Book and CD to the local musicians / storytellers and family members representing those who are sadly no longer with us. These included Larry Frain on behalf of Martin Frain (RIP), Michael Joe Caulfield, Malachy Óg Egan on behalf of Malachy Egan (RIP), Johnnie Towey, Kaye Keane on behalf of Frank Keane (RIP) and Padraig Gallagher on behalf of Mary Morley Byrne (RIP). The afternoon finished with a 'cupán tae' and some

home baking provided courtesy of the ‘Cois Tine’ Heritage Committee and some tunes from local and visiting musicians. The evening ended with a mighty session in Finan’s Bar in Charlestown.

Local and visiting musicians enjoyed a tune after the Book / CD launch

Summer School Session in Finan's Bar, Charlestown

Monday, 2nd July started with class registration in Kilmovee Community Centre with over 200 pupils registering from all over Ireland including pupils from Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Sligo, Leitrim, Cork, Kerry, Waterford, Limerick, Tipperary, Meath, Kildare, Laois and Dublin. They were all allocated to 25 different classes in music, song, dance and Gaeilge by 10am. The staff of the Kilmovee Community Centre and the Family Resource Centre with support from the Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School Committee and volunteers from the area helped ensure everything ran smoothly for the week.

Le Chéile performing at the closing concert

On Monday night the Official Opening took place, with an outstanding performance by the Knocknashee Céilí Band which included tutors Theresa O'Grady, Cian & Caoimhe Kearins and Daithí Gormley.

The Knocknashee Céilí Band at the Official Opening of the Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School

This was followed by the ‘Cois Tine’ Heritage Night with local and visiting singers, dancers, musicians and storytellers, ending a great day.

Local and visiting musicians at the ‘Cois Tine’ Heritage Night following the Official Opening

From Tuesday to Thursday, morning classes continued from 10am to 1pm each day with afternoon classes from 2pm to 5pm. Many pupils chose to attend a class in their favourite instrument in the morning, stay for lunch in the Community Centre and then attend a class in Sean Nós Dancing, Comhrá Gaeilge, Traditional Singing or a second instrument in the afternoon.

Morning Classes at the Summer School

Afternoon Classes at the Summer School

Sessions were held each night, starting with Duffy's Four Ways in Kilmovee on Tuesday night, Shazzy Mac's in Kilkelly on Wednesday night and The Brusna Inn

in Brusna on Thursday night. The sessions were led by local musicians and tutors, starting at 8pm each night with a slow session followed by the full session at 9.30pm. The quality of music, song and dance at the sessions from the pupils was commented on by many parents, who were delighted to see their children getting this opportunity to play with other musicians. It was clear that the impact of classes throughout the year, followed by the annual Summer School, has started to come through in the quality of music that everyone attending the sessions was treated to each night.

Slow Session in Duffy's Four Ways, Kilmovee

Slow Session in Shazzy Mac's, Kilkelly

Summer School Session in the Brusna Inn

On Friday, all the focus was on the Closing Concert which started at 7pm. Pupils and Tutors treated everyone in the packed hall to a wonderful night’s entertainment and again the standard of music, song, dance and Gaeilge on display was commented on by many people present. It brought to an end another great week in Kilmovee.

At the start of the concert, the winners of the Seisiún Tent Competition were presented with the Seosamh Mac Gabhann perpetual trophy and a hamper. This is a competition, where a group of two or more pupils perform one selection, which could include music, song and dance in the Seisiún Tent during the week and gives pupils a chance to show off their talents. All the entries, which were of a very high standard were recorded and shown on the big screen before the concert commenced.

Lovely Laois - Winners of the Seisiún Tent Competition

Prizes were also presented to the winners of the #SMG18 Competition this year, a new competition for the best picture posted on Instagram with the hashtag – SMG18!

Colleen Towey-Duffy's Guitar Class – Winners of #SMG18 Competition!

The week is only made possible by the work put in by the Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School Committee, the staff of the Kilmovee Community Centre and Family Resource Centre as well as all the volunteers.

Funding is also an essential element to keep the Summer School going and this was secured with support from local politicians including Senator John O'Mahony, Councillors John Caulfield, Gerry Murray and Minister Michael Ring. Sponsors for the week were The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Comhaltas, IMRO, Mayo County Council, Foras na Gaeilge, Mayo Creative Ireland and Kilmovee Bingo.

Thanks also to all the local sponsors including Ballaghaderreen & District Credit Union, Durkin's Bar Restaurant & Accommodation, Brusna Inn, All Seasons' Florists, Kelly T.V. & Electrical, Imelda Towey, Brian Mulligan, Padraig Mulligan, Duffy's SuperValu, Fiddler's Elbow, Newsround, Tarpey's of Kilkelly, O'Donnell's Pharmacy, Charlestown, Kilmovee C.C.É. and Rushe's Shop, Kilmovee.

Of course the week would not be possible without the top class tutors and most importantly our pupils, who we look forward to welcoming back again next year at the 9th Seosamh Mac Gabhann Summer School, which takes place in Kilmovee from Sunday, June 30th to Friday, July 5th 2019.
Bígí linn!

www.smgsummerschool.com